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UNCLAS PARIS 001106

SIPDIS

FROM USMISSION UNESCO PARIS

SENSITIVE

FOR IO/UNESCO, EUR/NB

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [ECPS](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [EINT](#) [ETTC](#) [EAID](#) [UNESCO](#)

SUBJECT: IPDC BUREAU UPDATE

Ref: A) Paris 404, B) Paris 574 C) State 17667

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Ambassador Oliver spoke with the Ambassador of the Netherlands on February 17, 2006 and confirmed that the Dutch Ambassador still plans to run for the Group I seat on the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) Bureau. In the meantime, the Greek Ambassador has told the Dutch that he would like to run for a split seat with them - a total reversal of his previous stance to step aside if the U.S. wanted to run for a shared seat with the Netherlands (an earlier U.S. suggestion). The Dutch Ambassador, however, was uninterested. Ambassador Oliver told her that she agreed with point(reftel) that now might not be a good time for the U.S. to run against the Danish Presidency of the IPDC, given the current political situation. Given the changing circumstances, Mission recommends not running for the IPDC Chair or the Group One seat, rather committing 150,000 USD in ICSECA funds to the IPDC and perhaps running for the bureau in 2007.

GREEK ABOUT FACE

2. (SBU) The Dutch Ambassador stated that Greece had offered to split the seat, serving in it from 2006 to 2007, while the Netherlands would serve in the seat from 2007 to 2008. This came as a surprise to all, since the Greek Ambassador had previously been supportive of a U.S. suggestion to run for a shared seat with the Netherlands. In exchange for this deal, the Greek Ambassador "guaranteed" that, as the 2007 chair of Group I, he could run for and win a second term in 2007. He would then share it with the Netherlands, so that each side served the equivalent of a full 2-year term. However, the Dutch Ambassador confided to Ambassador Oliver that she did not trust the Greek Ambassador, and besides her government and national Commission for UNESCO wanted her to only run for a 2-year term.

DELICATE DENMARK

3. (SBU) Ambassador Oliver noted the continuing global furor over Danish political cartoons negatively depicting Muslims, and stated that she agreed with the Dutch Ambassador's assessment that now might not be the best time to approach Denmark about stepping down from the IPDC Presidency. The Dutch Ambassador was very pleased to note this.

MISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

4. (SBU) Given the changing circumstances, Mission recommends not running for the Presidency of the IPDC unless the current Danish President, who plans to run again, changes his mind for some unexpected reason. Mission does not plan to run this year against the Netherlands for the Group I seat since the Netherlands will get all of the votes from the EU member states in Group I. Therefore, to demonstrate U.S. commitment to the IPDC, Mission recommends giving 150,000 USD of the existing ICSECA funds to the IPDC and perhaps running for the bureau in 2008.
Oliver